

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

S E C R E T STATE 249789

NODIS

RABAT FOR ASST SEC ATHERTON ONLY

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 7104 ACTION SECSTATE 21 OCT 75

QUOTE

S E C R E T AMMAN 7104

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, EG, SY, JO, US

SUBJECT: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER ABOUT EGYPTIAN VISIT AND SYRIAN
RELATIONS

1. SUMMARY: RIFAI MET WITH SADAT FOR OVER TWO HOURS
OCTOBER 19. SADAT WONDERED WHAT ASAD WAS UP TO. RIFAI
REPLIED THAT ASAD IS ASKING THE SAME OF YOU (SADAT). SADAT
WOULD NOT DISCUSS DETAILS OF SINAI AGREEMENT. HE PUT GREAT
STRESS ON SOME FOLLOW-ON STEP ON GOLAN FOR ASAD. SAID US

HAD ALWAYS KEPT ITS PROMISES TO HIM AND US HAD PROMISED
TO DO SOMETHING ON GOLAN. RIFAI DISCUSSED JORDANIAN
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PROPOSAL OF GETTING SOMETHING FOR ASAD ON GOLAN WHICH HE CAN'T
REFUSE OR AT LEAST RESUSE, TO TALK ABOUT. HE SAID SADAT AGREED
ON THIS PROCESS. HE BELIEVES SADAT WILL PLACE A MAJOR FOCUS
ON HIS TRIP TO US ON EFFORT TO GET SOMETHING FOR ASAD. SADAT

WAS CRUDE AND SCATHING IN HIS COMMENTS ABOUT THE PLO. HE PUT EMPHASIS ON NEED FOR KING HUSSEIN TO GET WEST BANK BACK AND REVERSAL OF RABAT DECISION. HE SAID TO DO THIS JORDANIANS AND PALESTINIANS MUST COME TOGETHER AND SYRIA CAN HELP. 1976 SHOULD BE THE YEAR OF THE ARABS TO GET TOGETHER WHEN US ELECTIONS PUT DAMPER ON PEACE ACTIVITIES. RIFAI BELIEVES SYRIA WILL CONTINUE THE UNDOF MANDATE ON THE GOLAN BUT WILL PERHAPS NEED SOME FACE-SAVING ARRANGEMENT SUCH AS A WALDHEIM TRIP TO THE AREA. RIFAI ALSO BELIEVES THAT SYRIA WILL ACCEPT DISCUSSION OF A FEW KILOMETERS ON THE GOLAN BUT TO GET THIS GOING US WILL NEED TO PRESENT A SUBSTANTIALLY INTERESTING ISRAELI PROPOSAL TO ASAD. PROGRESS ON THE GOLAN CANNOT WAIT UNTIL AFTER US ELECTIONS, ACCORDING TO RIFAI. ASAD'S TRIP TO MOSCOW WAS MAINLY TO GET WEAPONS AND ASAD SEEMS TO BE VERY PLEASED WITH WHAT SOVIETS GAVE HIM, ALTHOUGH JORDANIANS SHORT ON DETAILSJM END SUMMARY.

2. I SAW RIFAI IN THE EARLY EVENING OF OCTOBER 20 FOLLOWING

HIS RETURN FROM EGYPT. HE GAVE ME A LONG REPORT ON HIS DISCUSSIONS AND ALSO TALKED ABOUT CONTINUING JORDANIAN CONTACTS WITH SYRIA.

3. RIFAI SAID HE MET WITH SADAT FOR OVER TWO HOURS, WAS VERY CORDIALLY RECEIVED, AND BELIEVES THE PREVIOUS PUBLICITY FLAP WHICH CAUSED HIM TO CANCEL THE EARLIER MEETING WAS A MISTAKE AND NOT A DELIBERATE EGYPTIAN ATTEMPT TO SEEK ADVANTAGE AT JORDANIAN EXPENSE. HE SAID THAT SADAT SOUNDLY DISCIPLINED ASHRAF MARWAN WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING ALONG WITH MUBARAK AND SALIM FOR MISMANAGING THE VISIT. RIFAI SAID HE WAS PERSONALLY DEEPLY EMBARRASSED BY THE LOUD AND UNRESTRAINED HUMILIATION OF MARWAN. SADAT TOLD RIFAI IN THE FUTURE THAT HE SHOULD MAINTAIN CONTACT WITH EGYPT THROUGH MUBARAK AND TO FORGET DEALING WITH ISMAIL FAHMI OR ASHRAF MARWAN. THE DIG AT FAHMI OF COURSE WENT WELL WITH RIFAI.

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4. ON THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONVERSATIONS, SADAT OPENED WITH A QUESTION ABOUT WHAT DOES ASAD WANT? RIFAI SAID TO FIND THE ANSWER TO THIS SEEMED TO BE THE MAJOR REASON FOR HIS BEING INVITED TO COME TO CAIRO. RIFAI REPLIED THAT "ASAD IS ASKING THE SAME QUESTION OF YOU (SADAT)." RIFAI SAID HE DISCUSSED FREELY AND OPENLY WITH SADAT JORDANIAN CRITICISMS OF THE SINAI ACCORD. RIFAI SAID SADAT SPENT LITERALLY THREE QUARTERS OF THE MEETING DISCUSSING IN EXTENSIVE HISTORICAL DETAIL HIS RELATIONS WITH SYRIA, THE SOVIET UNION, THE UNITED STATES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT OVER THE LAST SEVERAL YEARS. NOT ONCE DID HE JUSTIFY THE AGREEMENT. RIFAI SAID IT IS OBVIOUS THAT SADAT WAS NOT PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE AGREEMENT; HE HAS SIGNED IT AND HE WILL LIVE WITH IT AND

WILL NOT ARGUE ABOUT IT.

5. SADAT INSISTED THAT HIS STRATEGY REMAINS THE SAME -- TO GET BACK THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES. HE IS WILLING TO DISCUSS WITH ANYONE THE STRATEGY AND ALL THE OTHER ARABS SHOULD BE AGREED UPON IT. HIS TACTICS ARE HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITY; IT IS AN INTERNAL MATTER FOR EGYPTIANS. TACTICS HE WILL NOT DISCUSS OR LEAVE OPEN TO AGREEMENT WITH OTHERS. BUT SADAT, ACCORDING TO RIFAI, INSISTED THAT THE AGREEMENT ON THE SINAI WAS NOT THE END OF ANY PROCESS AND THAT IT COULD NOT STAND ALONE AND WITHOUT THE NEXT STEP ON THE GOLAN. SADAT EMPHASIZED FOR RIFAI THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD MADE PROMISES TO HIM ABOUT MOVING ON THE GOLAN. SADAT SAID HE WAS SURE THE UNITED STATES WOULD KEEP ITS PROMISES. PRESIDENTS NIXON AND FORD AND THE SECRETARY HAD MADE PROMISES TO HIM AND THEY HAD BEEN KEPT. THE UNITED STATES WAS NOT LIKE THE SOVIET UNION WHICH MADE PROMISES WHICH IT COULD NOT OR DID NOT INTEND TO KEEP. BUT IF THE UNITED STATES DID NOT KEEP THE PROMISES IT HAD MADE TO EGYPT, THEN SADAT SAID THAT HE WOULD TREAT THE UNITED STATES EXACTLY THE WAY HE HAD TREATED THE SOVIET UNION, WITH A FULL AND PUBLIC EXPOSE OF THE FAILURE TO KEEP THEIR PROMISES.

6. SADAT, ACCORDING TO RIFAI, HAD SOME PLEASANT WORDS TO SAY ABOUT THE KING AND APPEARED GENUINELY TO WELCOME THE KING'S EFFORTS TO PLAY A ROLE BETWEEN SYRIA AND EGYPT. RIFAI SAID HE URGED ON SADAT THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY TO
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GET SOMETHING ON THE GOLAN. HE TRIED OUT WITH SADAT THE IDEA WHICH THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY GIVEN UP OF GETTING FOR ASAD SOME ISRAELI STEP ON THE GOLAN WHICH SYRIA COULD NOT TURN DOWN. RIFAI SAID SADAT AGREED ENTHUSIASTICALLY. FROM THEIR CONVERSATION, RIFAI TOLD ME HE CONCLUDES THAT SADAT WILL MAKE A GENUINE AND SERIOUS EFFORT DURING HIS US TRIP TO PURSUE THIS LINE OF ENCOURAGING THE US TO GET SOMETHING FOR ASAD ON THE GOLAN. RIFAI SAID HE AND SADAT AGREED THE PRESENT ARRANGEMENT IS LIKE A THREE-LEGGED STOOL AND CANNOT STAND WITHOUT THE ADDITION OF A FOURTH LEG WHICH IS SOMETHING ON THE GOLAN FOR ASAD.

7. SADAT ALSO DISCUSSED THE WEST BANK. HE SAID THAT RABAT MUST BE SOMEHOW REVERSED. NOTHING CAN BE DONE WITHOUT KING HUSSEIN. JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS SHOULD GET TOGETHER ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARD BUT ONLY THE KING CAN GET SOMETHING NEGOTIATED ON THE WEST BANK. SYRIA CAN CERTAINLY HELP IN THE PROCESS OF BRINGING JORDAN AND THE PALESTINIANS TOGETHER. 1976, THE YEAR OF THE US ELECTION, WILL FOR THAT REASON BE A QUIET YEAR IN TERMS OF PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST, SAID SADAT. THEREFORE WE MUST MAKE IT THE YEAR OF THE ARABS WHEN ALL OF US GET TOGETHER IN A UNITED POSITION

FOR THE WORK AHEAD. SADAT SAID THAT THIS GENERAL APPROACH HOWEVER MUST BE PRECEDED BY SOMETHING ON THE GOLAN FOR ASAD.

8. WHEN THE PLO CAME UP IN THE CONVERSATION, RIFAI SAID HE WAS TREATED TO A LONG SERIES OF UNCOMPLIMENTARY REFERENCES, THE MILDEST OF WHICH WERE UNPRINTABLE. SADAT MAINTAINED THAT THE ORGANIZATION HAD NO COHESION, WAS BUILT ON TRICKERY, WAS COMPLETELY UNRELIABLE AND THAT SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE ABOUT IT. THERE WERE APPARENTLY NO GOOD WORDS FOR ANY OF THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP OF THE PLO.

9. RIFAI TOLD ME THAT HE FELT THE TRIP HAD BEEN EXTREMELY USEFUL. HE WILL OF COURSE HAVE TO TEMPER SOME OF SADAT'S FRANKER REMARKS ABOUT ASAD IN REPORTING TO THE SYRIANS ON THE TRIP. HE HAD UNDERTAKEN A SIMILAR FILTERING PROCESS WITH RESPECT TO ASAD'S REMARKS ABOUT SADAT. HE HAD THE IMPRESSION, IN SPITE OF THE PERSONAL FRANKNESS -- INDEED BLUNTNESS -- ON THE PART OF SADAT AND ASAD ABOUT EACH OTHER, THAT THERE
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CONTINUED TO BE SOME PERSONAL RESPECT LEFT AND HE WOULD DO HIS BEST TO ENHANCE THIS WITHOUT TOO MUCH STRETCHING.

9. WE THEN MOVED TO THE SYRIAN SITUATION. AS ANNOUNCED OCTOBER 20, RIFAI WILL GO TO DAMASCUS ON SATURDAY, OCTOBER 25, FOR TWO DAYS TO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER AYYUBI AS PART OF REGULAR JORDANIAN-SYRIAN CONSULTATIONS. HE EXPECTS TOO SEE ASAD THEN AND TO REPORT ON HIS ACTIVITIES, PARTICULARLY HIS VISIT TO EGYPT. I TOLD RIFAI I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT THE GENERAL DRUM FIRE OF COMMENT ON

THE SINAI AGREEMENT, EVEN IN SYRIA, HAD BEGUN TO ABATE. HE SAID THAT WAS HIS VIEW ALSO AND HE FELT THAT IT WAS A NATURAL EVOLUTION WHICH WOULD CONTINUE.

10. I ASKED RIFAI WHAT HE THOUGHT THE SYRIANS WOULD DO ABOUT THE UNDOF MANDATE. HE SAID HIS OWN IMPRESSION WAS THAT THEY WOULD RENEW. THEY MIGHT HAVE TO PROVIDE FOR THE

POSSIBILITY OF GETTING WALDHEIM TO COME TO SEE ASAD AS A WAY OF PERMITTING ASAD TO EXPLAIN HIS GOING AHEAD WITH THE UN FORCE.

WALDHEIM MIGHT BE ABLE TO TELL ASAD THAT IF HE WERE TO KEEP QUIET, THE SECURITY COUNCIL COULD PASS A RESOLUTION KEEPING THE FORCE IN BEING. ASAD WOULD OF COURSE PRIVATELY HAVE TO AGREE. THE RESOLUTION, HOWEVER, WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE COMMENTED UPON PUBLICLY BY SYRIA. RIFAI ALSO DISCUSSED ANOTHER OPTION WHICH WOULD, FOLLOWING THE PROJECTED MID-NOVEMBER MEETING BETWEEN THE KING AND ASAD, ALLOW THE TWO LEADERS TO INCLUDE IN THEIR COMMUNIQUE A STATEMENT THAT THEY HAD AGREED THAT THE FORCE WOULD STAY ON IN THE GOLAN.

THERE WAS ALWAYS ALSO THE CHANCE THAT ASAD MIGHT DO AS

HE HAD EARLIER THIS YEAR, AND CONTINUE THE FORCE ON THE BASIS OF A SEPARATE AND IDENTIFIABLE SYRIAN DECISION. RIFAI'S VIEW WAS ALSO THAT THE RENEWAL WOULD BE FOR SIX MONTHS.

11. AS HE HAD IN PAST CONVERSATIONS, RIFAI LEFT ME UNDER NO DOUBT THAT SYRIA WOULD ACCEPT A DISENGAGEMENT, BUT IT CLEARLY HAD TO BE SOMETHING MORE THAN 200 METERS ON THE GOLAN -- HE
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TALKS REGULARLY IN TERMS OF A "FEW" KILOMETERS OF "FIVE KILOMETERS." RIFAI FEELS CONFIDENT THAT ASAD IS A SENSIBLE MAN AND A MODERATE MAN AND WILL ACCEPT SOMETHING OF THAT SORT. RIFAI STILL BELIEVES THAT WHAT IS IMPORTANT TO GET THINGS GOING IS THAT THE UNITED STATES COME TO ASAD WITH SOME INDICATION THAT THE ISRAELIS ARE PREPARED TO MAKE A REASONABLE MOVE ON THE GOLAN. RIFAI TOLD ME THAT SADAT EMPHASIZED TO HIM THE FACT THAT HE HAD EARLY ON TOLD THE SECRETARY HE MUST HAVE THE BASES AND THE OIL FIELDS BACK. SADAT HAD BEEN TOLD THAT SUCH A STEP WOULD BE POSSIBLE AND FROM THAT POINT ON THE NEGOTIATION WHILE EXCRUCIATING WAS ABOUT THE DETAILS OF HOW TO GET THAT OBJECTIVE. SADAT COMPLAINED THAT ASAD CANNOT OR WILL NOT DEFINE SUCH AN OBJECTIVE. IF ASAD IS ASKED, HE WILL SAY HE WANTS THE WHOLE GOLAN. IF THE WHOLE GOLAN IS TALKED ABOUT THEN HE SAYS HE WANTS THE PALESTINIANS BACK ON THE WEST BANK. IF THAT IS DISCUSSED THEN HE TALKS ABOUT JERUSALEM AND SO FORTH. SO WITH ASAD, ACCORDING TO SADAT, YOU HAVE THE PROBLEM OF DEALING WITH A SYRIAN. HE WILL INSIST ON HAVING THE WHOLE WORLD, AS HE DID DURING THE FIRST GOLAN DISENGAGEMENT, BUT FINALLY AGREED TO ACCEPT A GOOD DEAL LESS.

12. RIFAI DISCUSSED VERY BRIEFLY AGAIN ASAD'S VISIT TO MOSCOW. (SYRIAN AIR FORCE CHIEF NAJI JAMIL HAS BEEN HERE PRESUMABLY TO BRIEF THE JORDANIANS ON THIS SUBJECT.) RIFAI SAID THAT THE MAJOR FOCUS OF THE VISIT WAS ON WEAPONS. THE SOVIETS GAVE EXTENSIVE PRIVATE SUPPORT TO SYRIAN OPPOSITION TO THE SINAI AGREEMENT. RIFAI HOWEVER DOES NOT THINK THE SOVIETS WILL MAKE ANY PUBLIC STATEMENTS. THE SYRIANS SAY THEY GOT ALL THE WEAPONS THEY WANTED. THEY DID NOT GO WITH A SHOPPING LIST. ASAD MERELY TOLD THE RUSSIANS "YOU KNOW WHAT THE AMERICANS ARE GIVING THE ISRAELIS, WE WANT WHAT YOU THINK WE NEED TO BALANCE THAT." ACCORDING TO RIFAI, THE RUSSIANS HAVE BEEN VERY FORTHCOMING. HE WAS RETICENT ON DETAILS BUT SAID HE THOUGHT THE MAJOR THRUST WOULD BE ON ADDITIONAL AND MORE SOVIET EQUIPMENT IN THE FIELD OF AIR DEFENSE--MISSILES, ETC, TOGETHER WITH TANKS AND ARTILLERY.

13. RECOMMEND DEPT PASS TO SECRETARY'S PARTY,ATHERTON, DAMASCUS

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AND CAIRO.

PICKERING

UNQUOTE. INGERSOLL

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